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Sweden Asks Life Term For Col. Wennerstrom

From Cable Dispatches.

STOCKHOLM.

The prosecution yesterday asked Sweden's severest penalty—a life sentence at hard labor—for Air Force Col. Stig Wennerstrom, the confessed Soviet spy who told the court he had committed espionage for "idealistic reasons."

Prosecutor Werner Rhyninger brushed aside the 57-year-old ex-diplomat's excuse and called his case "the most disgraceful crime in Swedish history." Wennerstrom spied, the prosecutor insisted, for "opportunistic reasons."

The judge in Stockholm's Central Criminal Court announced that sentence will be passed on June 12—just 10 days before Soviet Premier Khrushchev is scheduled to visit Sweden on a good will tour.

The defense urged the jury of five women and four men to take Wennerstrom's idealism into account and set a

fixed term for his sentence for humanitarian reasons. The term suggested was 12 years.

Mr. Rhyninger struck hard at the defendant yesterday in one of the trial's few public sessions. Although he has admitted selling U. S. and NATO defense information to the Soviets, Wennerstrom was tried only on charges that he had peddled 160 of neutral Sweden's top defense secrets.

"Wennerstrom's hunger for prestige and his conceit had been the prime motives, and his sub rosa employers had shrewdly been lavish with praise, flattery and money," Mr. Rhyninger declared.

Furthermore, the prosecutor continued, Wennerstrom had worked as a German intelligence agent during World War II, although he later accused the U. S. of starting him on his spy career in the late 1940s.

"As long as the Germans were successful he sympa-

thized with them," the prosecutor said. "After Stalingrad he changed his mind." His 14-year espionage career included work in Washington, Moscow and NATO headquarters in Paris.

While Wennerstrom was in Moscow, Mr. Rhyninger said, the Soviets helped him with his Swedish Embassy chores so he could spend more time on espionage for them. He was highly paid and had an almost unlimited expense account, the prosecutor said.

Ashen-faced, Wennerstrom took the stand for five minutes and said his spying had been "aimed at preserving the peace and power balance of the world." He emphasized that most of his work was aimed at NATO, not at his own country.

"Whether I am right or wrong, only the future can decide," Wennerstrom said. "But my 14 years behind the scenes of the cold war convinced me the Russians were peace-loving...."